

AMENDMENTS THE CLAIMS

This Listing will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A ~~powder~~ food product in powder form obtained from drying a milk caramel product, the powder form food product containing at least a high molecular weight polysaccharide in an amount of between about 3 wt % and about 40 wt % relative to the weight of solids in the powder, and a humidity between about 1 and about 7%.

2. (Currently amended) The powder product of claim 1, wherein the high molecular weight polysaccharide is a member selected from the group consisting of starch, modified starch, equivalent dextrose maltodextrin lower than 20 (DE<20), gum arabic, and combinations thereof.

3. (original) The powder product of claim 1, further comprising at least one additive selected from anti foam agents, anti-moisteners, anti-agglutinants, anti-oxidants, colorants, sweeteners, thickeners, gelatinizing agents, stabilizers, aromatizers, flavorants, moisture additives, acidity controllers, emulsion agents, emulsifiers, flavor enhancers, chemical leavening agents, consistency agents, hardeners, texture agents, sequesters, color stabilizers and foaming additives.

4. (original) The powder product of claim 1, wherein the powder product has an apparent density of between 0.1 g/ml and 0.65 g/ml, a maximum solubility index of 1.5 ml and a maximum fluidity of 120 seconds.

5. (withdrawn) A process for obtaining a powder food product based on milk caramel, the method comprising the steps of: i) cooking together at least milk and sugar until obtaining a milk caramel product having between about 30 wt % and about 60 wt % solids, ii) pasteurizing the milk caramel product at a temperature of between about 50.degree. C. and about 85.degree. C., iii) homogenizing the pasteurized milk caramel product into a mixture at a pressure between about 5 kg/cm.sup.2 and about 100 kg/cm.sup.2, iv) adding to the mixture a high molecular

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weight polysaccharide before, simultaneously with, or after any of the above steps, in an amount of between about 3 wt % and about 40 wt % of the total dry weight, and v) drying and agglomerating the mixture until obtaining a powder having between about 1% and about 7% moisture.

6. (withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein the addition of the polysaccharide is made at the beginning of step i).

7. (withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein the addition of the polysaccharide is made during step i).

8. (withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein the addition of the polysaccharide is made at the end of step i).

9. (withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein the addition of the polysaccharide is made before, during or after step iii).

10. (withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein the step of drying is carried out by a method selected from spray drying, lyophilization, and rolling drying.

11. (withdrawn) The method of claim 5, further comprising the step of adding at least one additive to the product, the additive being selected from anti foam agents, anti-moisteners, anti-agglutinants, anti-oxidants, colorants, sweeteners, thickeners, gelatinizing agents, stabilizers, aromatizers, flavorants, moisture additives, acidity controllers, emulsion agents, emulsifiers, flavor enhancers, chemical leavening agents, consistency agents, hardeners, texture agents, sequesters, color stabilizers and foaming additives.

12. (withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein the at least one additive is added to the powder product obtained in step v).

13. (withdrawn) The method of claim 12, wherein the at least one additive is added by mixing and agglomerating the same with the powder product thus obtaining an instantaneous dissolving powder product.

14. (withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein the at least one additive is added to the milk caramel product during or after step i).

15. (withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein volatile components are given off during the process and such components are recovered and re-inserted into the mixture.

16. (withdrawn) The method of claim 5, wherein the high molecular weight polysaccharide is selected from starch, modified starch, equivalent dextrose maltodextrine lower than 20 (DE<20), gum arabic, and combinations thereof.

17. (Previously presented) A food product wherein the powder food product of claim 1 is mixed with lecithin and partially dehydrogenated fat for obtaining a cover topping for pastry and confectionery.

18. (Previously presented) A food product wherein the powder food product of claim 1 is mixed with starch, partially dehydrogenated fat and caramel colorant for obtaining a filler for pastry and confectionery.

19. (Previously presented) A food product wherein the powder food product of claim 1 is mixed with partially dehydrogenated fat and sugar for obtaining a creamy filler for pastry and confectionery.

20. (Previously presented) A food product wherein the powder food product of claim 1 is mixed with demineralized whey, partially dehydrogenated fat and sugar for obtaining a spreading paste.

21. (Previously presented) A food product wherein the powder food product of claim 1 is mixed with powder whey, powder skimmed milk, an emulsifier and sugar, for obtaining a mousse.

22. (Previously presented) A food product wherein the powder food product of claim 1 is mixed with stabilizers, emulsifiers, powder milk, powder skimmed milk, and sodium citrate for obtaining a milk caramel shake product.

23. (Previously presented) A food product wherein water is added to the powder product of claim 1 for obtaining a reconstituted milk caramel product with a moisture content of between about 10% and about 30%.

24. (withdrawn). A process for obtaining a powder food product from a milk caramel product having between about 30 wt % and about 60 wt % solids, the method comprising the steps of: i) pasteurizing the milk caramel product at a temperature of between about 50. degree. C. and about 85. degree. C., ii) homogenizing the pasteurized milk caramel product into a mixture at a pressure between about 5 kg/cm.sup.2 and about 100 kg/cm.sup.2, iii) adding to the mixture a high molecular weight polysaccharide before, simultaneously with, or after any of the above steps, in an amount of between about 3 wt % and about 40 wt % of the total dry weight, and iv) drying and agglomerating the mixture until obtaining a powder having between about 1% and about 7% moisture.